Bonusly

What Employees Want:
More Appreciation at Work

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What we found: survey results

It's been quite a wild ride for HR teams over the last few years. One trend we've uncovered is that employees want more appreciation from employers. In fact, 63% of workers have described feeling unappreciated by their employer on a daily basis.

To understand what employees want most from employers, we created a study. Our poll included 2,000 employed or active job searchers from the last five years. We found many high level insights on how appreciation influences engagement and retention in the workplace.

While career advancement and positive management feedback remain popular for aspiring job seekers and current workers, employees expressed the importance of peer-to-peer appreciation, too. Turns out that receiving vocal encouragement or small rewards from teammates can really make someone feel motivated, and contribute to their overall wellness at work.

Many companies have been looking to find answers and improvements for their recruiting and retention strategies, as the Great Resignation continues to linger and provide new challenges. In our study we connect the dots for organizations to gather impactful data that tells a story of discovering more about what makes each employee thrive.

Developing a comprehensive employee appreciation plan with your leadership, HR, and management teams will ensure that good work and progress are noticed and rewarded. As employees feel appreciated for both their work and who they are as individuals, we think better outcomes exist for both parties. Take a look at some of the results we found from our survey—some of the stats may surprise you!

The employee appreciation dilemma

Whether by an executive or a peer, employees simply want to be recognized. Employee recognition and appreciation are essential in keeping teams engaged. Bonusly asked 2,000 Americans how important employee appreciation is to them. Turns out, there is an alarming dilemma that was found amongst currently employed and active job seekers.

63% of workers feel unappreciated by their employer on a daily basis

When considering the big picture question of "what do employees want more of from their employers?" appreciation is a key factor. As the Great Resignation continues to redefine work culture, many media outlets are turning to data to suggest how employers can behave differently to attract and keep top talent.

Our study reached news outlets including Yahoo! Lifestyle, iHeart Media, and local stations across the U.S.—all interested in uncovering how employers can revive employee engagement and job satisfaction.

46% of respondents have left a job because they felt unappreciated

How employees want to be recognized

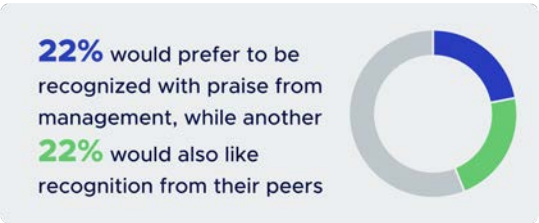
The national poll sought to uncover what employees really want from their employers and how simple acts of appreciation may impact their willingness to stay or join an organization. Employee recognition preferences are as unique as each of your employees. Some individuals deeply value recognition from their peers, while others find it much more meaningful when it comes from their manager.

It might be rewarding for certain employees to be recognized in person, while others may prefer a form of digital recognition that doesn't require them to respond. While the delivery of recognition varies, the outcomes of employees feeling like their work and opinions matter is invaluable. The survey made one thing clear: workers that feel appreciated and recognized are likely to stay engaged.

Exploring peer-to-peer recognition

"Visible peer-to-peer recognition plays a vital information sharing function," points out Kai Robinson, Bonusly's Director of Talent Acquisition. "Public recognition helps me understand the breadth and impact of my team's contributions since I'm not present for everything they're doing."

Both managers and employees benefit from recognition visibility inside an organization. Giving peers the opportunity and tools to communicate good work promotes a balanced approach to how many of us are motivated at work. In fact, the study shows that praise from peers can feel just as rewarding as recognition from management!



Employee appreciation motivates employees

Work has to have a purpose to sustain employee motivation in the long term. A Gallup poll revealed that employees who believe their work has purpose are more engaged, and engaged employees stay at companies longer, are more productive, and as a result—companies are 21% more profitable.

Employees want to feel that their professional journey and contribution to the company's goals are in sync. When your team and managers can see where you've been and where you want to go, it builds synergy. Many organizations have found success with implementing professional development paths for improving these parallel objectives for the company and each employee.

How recognition impacts your business

In addition to having a positive impact on your employees' mental health and happiness at work, recognition has a sizable impact on issues like retention and productivity. According to those surveyed, almost half (46%) of respondents have left a job because they felt unappreciated. Another 65% admitted that they would work harder if they felt like their contributions would be noticed by management.

Is there a consistent tool or process that your company follows to acknowledge and make time for employee appreciation? Working in these habits and practices promotes a more active and positive work environment, leading to increased productivity and personal fulfillment. Managers hold a lot of responsibility for actively gauging what each team needs and which motivation tactics will assist in employee engagement to keep their department running smoothly and meeting business objectives.

How managers can show employee appreciation

Good managers offer ways for employees to grow and succeed through empowerment, trust, and delivering a clear path for career growth. Survey respondents shared how much manager coaching comes into play as well. 25% of respondents favored appreciation through one-on-one coaching from management as a way their company invests in its employees on a daily basis.

Providing options for training and professional development gives employees ways to improve as an individual and how they can impact their team. Organizations that offer comprehensive training programs enjoy a 24% higher profit margin. Workers will feel more connected and valued if they believe managers are truly investing in them and not solely in the company or their own interests.

Managers must strive for each individual to feel seen and heard as they collaborate to achieve team and personal goals. Dissatisfied employees are now more open to explore options and make a career change with increased open positions to be filled. Managers must build in time to their schedules to check in and offer their support. Otherwise, they could face increasing challenges with retention and low performance issues due to lack of employee engagement.

"The Great Resignation showed us that employees want more than just a paycheck. As many companies transition toward remote work, there is an increased need to create positive interactions to build stronger connections, even if those are virtual," said Raphael Crawford-Marks, Bonusly Founder and CEO. "Retention and high-performance are directly impacted by how employees feel valued and recognized at work."

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>
> – Raphael Crawford-Marks, Bonusly Founder and CEO

A holistic approach to employee wellness

Employee wellness is a major ingredient in building healthy company cultures. Company transparency, practiced core values, and diversity of backgrounds and ways of thinking all present a unique mix to every team. Ultimately, each person wants to feel that their physical and emotional health are prioritized in order for them to produce good work.

From the poll we created, 30% of respondents would appreciate wellness stipends. Wellness stipends can cover gym memberships, opportunities for benefits surrounding mental health, and financial wellness training programs. To find out what wellness factors matter most to your employees, try sending out a questionnaire or survey to see if your mix is meeting their needs. As employee burnout remains a big issue, having effective programs for time off and work autonomy will continue to promote a holistic approach to employee health.

Organizations that provide wellness plans for employees show they are committed to an employee's long term health. This output ensures that workers believe companies are truly investing in them and not solely in the company's interest.

Takeaways for HR leaders

HR leaders have no easy task when it comes to understanding employee motivation and providing adequate appreciation for each person. It's an art and a science for people operations to build programs and routines that will continue to support high performing teams.

Clear messaging is central from the top of your organization down to entry level positions. No matter how much someone makes, what their title is, or what the perks are, everyone wants to know where they stand. Employees need to feel a sense of purpose, progress, and belonging at work.

HR and people leaders should create roadmaps and feedback loops for each employee to grow and succeed. This matters a great deal to employees, as many still appreciate companies that promote from within and give incentives to take on promotions.

HR teams that leverage data with qualitative information on employee satisfaction and company communication will continue to see success. No company is perfect, and there are always elements to improve in regards to company culture and employee satisfaction.

To get a sense of how well your leadership team is connecting with employees, you can provide routine assessments to guide your path to more thoughtful employee appreciation. Here are a few factors we found that organizations can improve upon going forward.

Where can employers improve the most?

Do any of these sound familiar? As recognition makes the top of the list, consider your current practices and employee incentives. Are there any possible adjustments to create a more equal partnership between employees and companies to initiate a longer tenure?

How would you describe your company culture today? Are you regularly supporting managers and each employee's career journey?

By focusing on some of the appreciation elements discussed in our latest poll, we think your team can come up with a winning mix for a happy and healthy work environment. If you are looking to take your recognition programs to the next level, explore the Bonusly platform to understand how to promote employee appreciation at scale.

How Bonusly Can Help You:

Bonusly is an employee engagement solution that combines 360-degree recognition, meaningful feedback, and rewards that employees love to keep them engaged and satisfied. Our software makes it fun and easy for everyone within your organization to publicly recognize everyone else by giving small bonuses that add up to meaningful rewards.

Improve Engagement

70% of Bonusly users said that Bonusly improved employee engagement. More than half (65%) of those surveyed saw improved eNPS scores after implementing Bonusly. Studies show that improved engagement is linked to better productivity, financial performance, customer experience, and retention! 📈

Grow Recognition Frequency

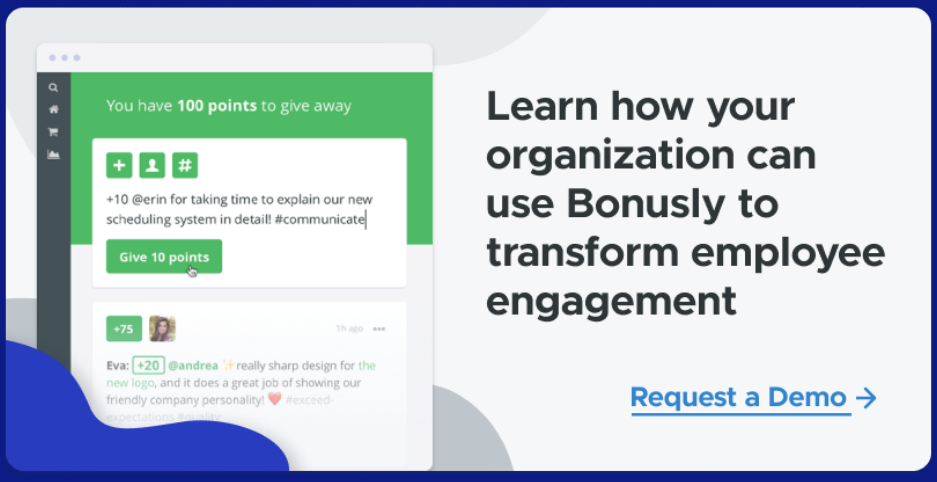
Around two-thirds of Bonusly customers reported both increased **frequency** of recognition and **increased** visibility of recognition. In fact, 74% of respondents saw increased frequency of recognition and 75% of respondents saw increased visibility of recognition. Seeing is believing! 👀

Boost Morale

Bonusly helps bring your company's core values to life with everyday interactions. 💚 72% of Bonusly users saw an Increased connection with core values after implementing Bonusly. When core values are connected to real, tangible, examples of employees living them, organizational culture is fortified.

Reduce Admin Time

77% of Bonusly users were able to implement Bonusly in less than a month, and 73% of Bonusly admins spend 2 hours or less managing Bonusly per month. This is huge. 😲 Bonusly is a fun and smart tool that increases employee engagement without a ton of complex overhead.



Learn how your organization can use Bonusly to transform employee engagement

Request a Demo →

Data from 2022 Bonusly User Survey